

## LONDON DOCKLANDS: POST-LDDC DEVELOPMENTS

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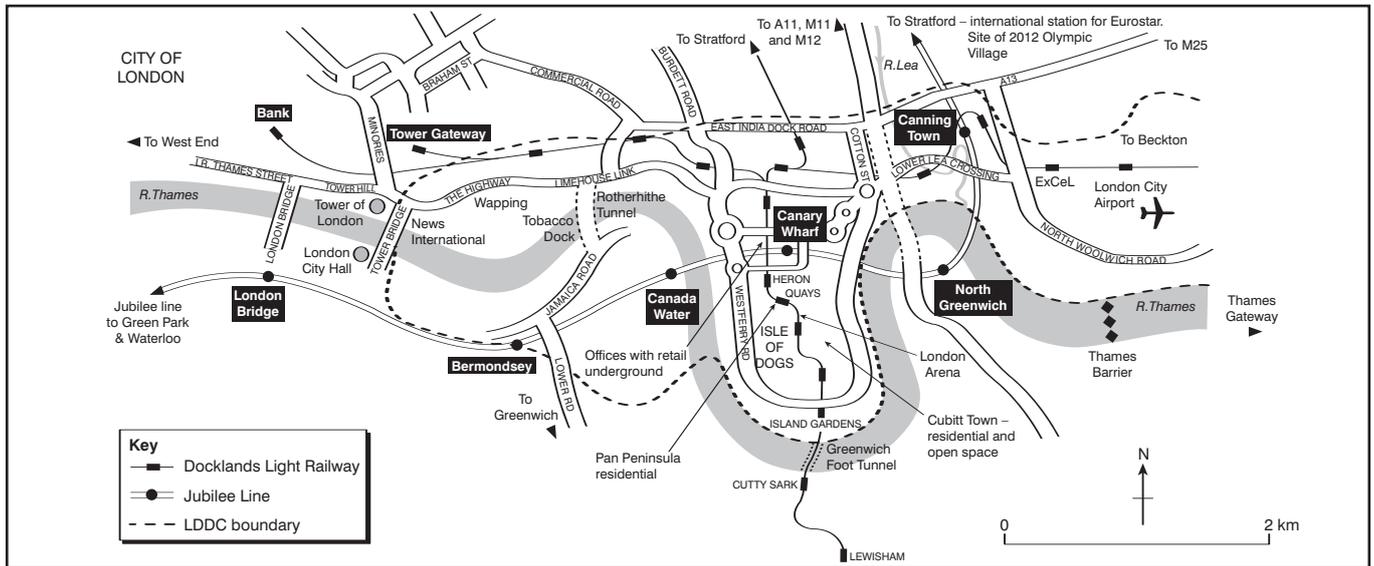


Figure 1: Regenerated Docklands

**T**HE LONDON DOCKLANDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (LDDC) was wound up between 1997 and 1998. It had been established in 1981 by the Conservative Government as a way of encouraging the private sector to invest in regenerating an area of London east of the City (Figure 1). *Regeneration* means ‘to renew’ or to impart new life to something.

### Why the area needed to be regenerated

- The docks in London, built between 1700 and 1921, were closed by 1981, as they were too small for modern container ships, which were using Tilbury (downstream) and Felixstowe on the east coast.
- Unemployment was high, especially among unskilled, former dockers.
- Houses and flats, many owned by local authorities such as Tower Hamlets, Southwark and Newham, were of a poor standard.
- Derelict land still remained from

bomb damage caused during the Second World War (1939–45).

- Some land was contaminated from former industries.
- The transport network was inadequate.
- There was a lack of recreation and green areas.

### How the area was regenerated

The Government established an Urban Development Corporation (UDC), a non-elected corporation, the LDDC, with total control over an area of 2,226 ha (8.5 square miles), with powers to make rapid planning decisions without consulting the local councils. Much of this area also became an Enterprise Zone, which qualified commercial and industrial projects to receive government grants and tax relief for a period of time. Figure 2 summarises the changes brought about during the life of the LDDC.

LDDC Annual Report		
	1981	1997
Land area (ha)	2,225	2,225
Derelict land (ha)	1,000	223
Population	39,400	80,000
Private investment	–	£6.5 billion
Public investment	–	£1.8 billion
Companies	1,000	2,450
Office/commercial/industrial/floorspace	–	2.3 million m <sup>2</sup>
Homes	15,000	35,600
Private housing	5%	43%
New/improved roads (km)	0	113
New/improved railways (km)	0	29
London City Airport annual passengers	–	727,600

Figure 2: Key facts from the 1997 LDDC Annual Report

Source: Dockland News, August 1997

The area today is controlled by three broad groups:

- **The local authority** – In 1994 the first part of the LDDC area in Southwark was returned to the control of the local authority, followed in 1997 and 1998 by the rest, in Tower Hamlets and Newham. This means that



Figure 3: Canary Wharf, including the One Canada Square building

statistical information for the area that was formerly controlled by the LDDC is now incorporated into that for the boroughs and is not collected separately. The local councils are now responsible for maintaining council dwellings, public open spaces, parkland, lighting, river frontages and for overall planning. The local councils receive revenue from council tax and business rates.

- **Private investors** – The local authority does not have responsibility for buildings like the 50-storey Canary Wharf building (Figure 3). International investors in such properties have included an American media tycoon, a Saudi Arabian prince and the Canadian developer Paul Reichman. Many companies rent entire blocks or floors of new office buildings (Figure 4).
- **Other bodies** – British Waterways took over responsibility for bridges in the former Docklands in March 1998, when the LDDC handed over control of the area.

## Key characteristics of Docklands

### Employment

There has been a growth in tertiary sector jobs. Financial institutions, legal companies, oil companies, news companies and medical and pharmaceutical companies have all begun to take up office space in Docklands, and some clustering of functions is evident.



Figure 4: Office tenants at One Canada Square, Canary Wharf

Source: Canary Wharf Group Press Office

The tenants of One Canada Square (see Figure 3), are listed in Figure 4. The HSBC (Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) chose to put its corporate headquarters in a 41-storey building in Canary Wharf rather than in the City of London. An accountancy firm, Littlejohn Frazer, had moved from the City of London to Docklands by the 1990s because of spiralling rents on office space in the City, attractive river views at the new venue, and nearness of the firm to big clients and the Lloyds insurance market. Overnight accommodation is provided for banking staff in some office blocks where employees need to be present for the opening hours of stock exchanges throughout the world.

Today, because of the threat of terrorism, security for these multi-storey office blocks is of paramount importance. Guards are mounted on entrances, credentials of those entering are checked and bags have to go through X-ray machines.

Jobs have also been created in retailing, supplying the needs of office workers with food, drinks, magazines, newspapers, clothes and footwear. Most of the shops are sited underground, although some bars and restaurants are by parks or pedestrian areas. Some people are still employed on construction projects. Around 80,000 people are now employed in the Canary Wharf complex.

### Housing

In 1981 it was estimated that 83% of homes in the London Docklands were council owned. In 1998 it was estimated that 45% of homes were owner-occupied and the rest rented or under shared ownership.

Much local authority housing in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Southwark has been refurbished, such as the Barley Mow Estate in Limehouse at a cost of £10.5 million, funded jointly by the

### RISING HIGH

Several of the new buildings planned for Canary Wharf will, unusually, be residential tower blocks rather than offices. It seems that many of the workers in this part of London – Japanese, Americans and Asians – are accustomed to living in high-rise luxury and will be prepared to pay the high prices demanded for the apartments here.

One of these new buildings, Pan Peninsula, will become one of the tallest residences in Europe, with 50 storeys, and about 155 metres tall. It will comprise 820 apartments, most of them with their own open-air balcony.

Prices will range from a modest £230,000 ('studio') to £850,000 (two bedrooms) – but parking is an extra £30,000 (and not available to the lower-priced properties).

Figure 5: Adapted from a national newspaper, November 2005

LDDC, Tower Hamlets Council and the Government's Estates Action Programme.

Old warehouses have been converted, and a two-bedroomed freehold property with off-street parking was offered for sale in July 2006 for £675,000. Currently, Alan Selby & Partners and Savills are marketing apartments in Pan Peninsula, a high-rise block to be completed in 2009. Figure 5 is from a report on this development. Property prices are very high, reflecting the demand for homes and a buoyant economy.

Although new, affordable housing has been constructed in some areas of London, such as south of the Dome on the Greenwich peninsula, little is apparent in the Isle of Dogs, around Canary Wharf. However, Tower Hamlets attracted government, European and private sector funding in the late 1990s to build new homes in the borough.

### Transport

One of the criticisms made of the LDDC was that it failed to develop or improve transport links adequately. Rather belatedly this is being remedied (see Figure 1).

- New roads have been built, such as the 1.8 km Limehouse Link which was opened in 1993. This link is an east-west route to relieve the congested A13. Road traffic is concentrated on the outer edge of the Canary Wharf complex while pedestrian areas and cycle tracks link areas within it.
- The Docklands Light Railway (DLR), constructed cheaply during the 1980s, is a computerised, driverless train service, mostly travelling overground and linking the Isle of Dogs with the City. In December 2005 an extension to the network, from Canning Town to North Woolwich costing £140 million, was opened by Mayor Ken Livingstone. One of the stops on the line is for London City Airport and with trains every 10 minutes passengers can reach the City in only 22 minutes.

- The Jubilee Line tube extension to Stratford was opened for the millennium. This is deep underground and runs between Stratford in the east and Stanmore in north-west London, with important stations at Canary Wharf and Westminster.
- London City Airport, originally called Stolport, was opened in November 1987. It has a single runway on the central quay in the Royal Docks. Because of the constraints of space only small passenger aircraft can be accommodated during weekdays, flying to nearby European cities such as Paris, Brussels and Dublin. Passenger numbers reached 1.9 million in 2005 and could reach 8 million by 2030, creating over 4,000 jobs.

### The environment and leisure

Simon Jenkins wrote in *The Evening Standard* in 1998 that east London has the richest gallery of modern architecture in Europe. One Canada Square, the tall iconic building in Canary Wharf (Figures 3 and 4), was designed by the Argentinean architect Cesar Pelli. Norman Foster and Richard Rogers are other famous architects who have designed buildings in the area.

Mature trees have been planted in open spaces and beside roads, especially in the Isle of Dogs. Green, public open spaces, often with fountains or running water, such as Jubilee Park above the Jubilee Line underground station, allow workers to relax during the working day. Bicycle parks are provided with the expectation of more people cycling. There are facilities for water sports, for example at the Royal Victoria Docks Water Sports Centre.

The ExCeL exhibition centre, by Custom House station on the DLR, hosts events such as the 2006 British International Motor Show which for many years was staged in Birmingham.

## The future

At present the London Docklands is thriving. Development theories involving growth poles and the multiplier effect can be applied to show how success feeds success (Figure 6). Future economic growth, especially eastward along the Thames Gateway, may depend on:

- a buoyant, national economy and political stability
- the demand by international companies, perhaps from the new European Union members, for prestigious sites in London, which is a world-renowned business centre
- the continuing demand for more homes and jobs in south-east England
- developing the infrastructure, for example finishing the Eurostar rail link into King's Cross and building Cross Rail to link west and east London
- the success of the bid to host the 2012 Olympics Games in the lower Lea valley at Stratford.

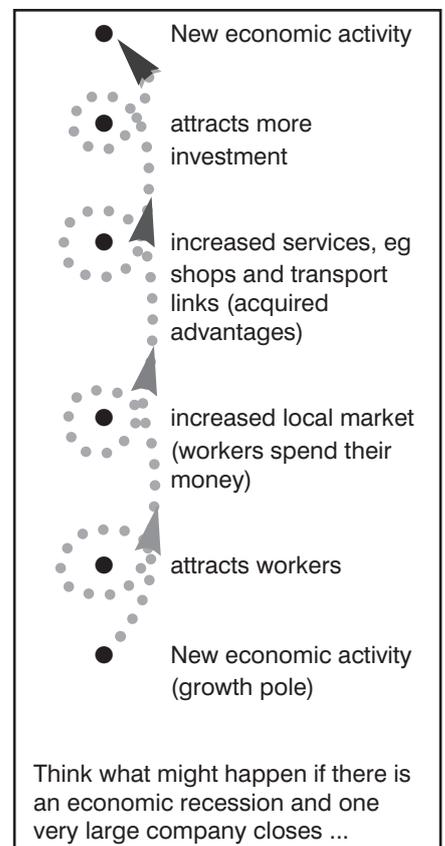


Figure 6: The upward spiral of growth and the multiplier effect

# Activities

1 Make a copy of Figure 7. Add to it the City of London and the LDDC area. Label your map, explaining why the regenerated Docklands area has attracted offices of international companies. Give your map a title.

2 (a) Use the information in Figure 2 to draw four separate diagrams:

(i) comparing the population of Docklands in 1981 and 1997  
(ii) comparing the number of companies in Docklands in 1981 and 1997  
(iii) comparing the number of homes in Docklands in 1981 and 1997

(iv) comparing the percentage of private housing in Docklands in 1981 and 1997.

Include a title with each diagram.

(b) Imagine you are a newspaper reporter.

*Either:*

- Write a short report describing the changes in Docklands from 1981 until the LDDC was wound up.

*or*

- Report the changes that have occurred in Docklands from 1997 to today.

3 Study Figure 4.

(a) How many of the companies listed are banks? (You may need to check this on the internet.)

(b) Use the internet to research three other companies on the list.

(c) What other businesses might provide services to those working in the offices in One Canada Square?

4 *Either:*

(a) Design an advertisement for a newspaper for use by an estate agent trying to sell an apartment in Pan Peninsula.

*or*

(b) Design a job advertisement, to be placed in a national or



Figure 7: South-east England

international newspaper, for a bank seeking employees in Canary Wharf.

5 In groups, discuss the following statements:

- Without the LDDC, regeneration of east London Docklands would not have happened so quickly.
- The success of the redeveloped Docklands depends on a growing economy in south-east England.
- Winning the bid for the 2012 Olympic Games will bring more prosperity and environmental improvements to the Lea Valley and Thameside.
- It is necessary to improve the environment, service and transport links before developing housing along the Thames Gateway.

Now write down your conclusions from your discussions.

6 Use your library or the internet to find out about another regenerated urban area in the UK, such as in Manchester or Glasgow. Decide whether that scheme has fulfilled its aims.